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Sep 18th 2018

Via ECFS  
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to  
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,\

I have been an Internet Service Provider services user for over 20 years. In that time I have used several and, at the end of mandatory contract periods (typically 2 years), reviewed all the Internet Service Providers in my SF/Bay Area region for the best individual consumer program that I may subscribe to. In short, I am always attentive to the expense of connecting to the Internet (most recently Broadband), especially since I am aware of the disparity in the cost to consumers in various countries around the world.

What I've learned in those 20 years is that the mandatory 2 year terms go hand-in-hand with the less or least competitive products offered. Without exception, the largest Internet Service Providers, for example the Nation-wide, large advertising corporations such as AT&T or Xfinity/Comcast, are the providers that require a long-term contract. They also price their Internet, necessary equipment and labor higher than the Local or Regional providers I survey and now use. The customer service of AT&T and Xfinity/Comcast is also haphazard, unreliable and high-handed.

My experience is that our regional ISPs are more competitive, flexible and helpful with problem-solving. Once I discovered that, even without a contract, I remained long-term with my Regional ISPs. I am currently with Sonic, who provides me with an unbeatable price for my Internet Services. They have recently upgraded my service at no extra cost and without my having to do or provide anything more than a request that they provide the higher Broadband fiber-optic product to me. They even allowed me to purchase and use my own Modem, rather than force me to rent that equipment as do AT&T and Comcast.

I am retired and now on a strictly budgeted, fixed income. The monthly expense of phone and Internet is now as intrinsic to my life as the purchase of food and transportation costs, given the absence of public transportation in my area. In my opinion, I would have fewer options and the ability to maintain my constrained existence or participate in the current social fabric without the competition and resultant cost savings that are afforded me by having multiple options to acquire the services I require. Internet access (and in my case, VoIP land-line phone service is included at no charge, something AT&T would charge \$25/mo) would be severely impacted by less competition. I see what the "Big Guys" charge and I am fortunate that I am able to turn other

choices. Surviving on my Social Security benefit is a challenge every month on all fronts and with regards to all the services I use.

I need the LOWEST prices available for these widely considered essential services in order to ensure that I may sustain my daily life in all facets of existence. I am not talking about participating and having money for discretionary expenses such as vacation, travel, entertainment or dining-out. I mean the ESSENTIALS. Higher Internet and phone costs would directly suppress what I can spend on the essentials.

Do Not Restrict Competition In This Area!

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